

# Who Are God's Elect?

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[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB 1995](#)

In a passage of Scripture known as the Olivet discourse (Matthew 24:1-25:46, Mark 13:1-37), Jesus taught about the end times. And within this passage He instructed us saying: “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.” (Matthew 24:24). We learn in this verse that there are some, God’s elect, who will not be misled or deceived about who Jesus is; it will be revealed to them that He is “the way, and the truth, and the life”, and no one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).

God’s “elect” are those whom He has “chosen” to be brought to faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. And for those of us who have been, or will at some point in God’s time, be brought to faith in Christ, Paul revealed that God “chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will” (Ephesians 1:4-5).

Many will say that man’s own will and decision to believe in Christ is the deciding factor in their salvation. ***However, the Bible teaches that man’s salvation does not occur by way of his own will and decision in the matter (John 15:16, Romans 9:16).*** The conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road, which is recorded three times in the book of Acts (Acts 9, 22, and 26), is a clear example from the Scriptures that an individual is brought to faith in Christ, apart from their own will and decision in the matter, at such time as they are called to faith in Christ.

This “calling” of an individual to faith in Christ is sometimes referred to as the “effectual calling of God”, by which all of God’s elect are called to faith in His

Son, and none refuse. God's elect are those who receive God's mercy, in that they have, or will at some point in time, be called to faith in Christ, while all the others have been hardened (Romans 9:18). Those who have been hardened are those who have been blinded by God Himself as to the truth of the Gospel message; they are unable to see it and understand it (Matthew 13:11, John 12:40).

Some, in an attempt to support the free will doctrine of salvation, will say that the "hardening" of an individual by God that is mentioned in Romans 9:18 is a "judicial" hardening that occurs only after they have had an "opportunity", or so many "opportunities", to believe the Gospel message, but they have refused. This idea would seem to support, at least logically, the free will doctrine of salvation by explaining God's hardening of an individual as being a result of their own will and decision to refuse to believe in Christ when they had the "chance" or the "opportunity" to do so. However, this idea is stated nowhere in the Bible. Therefore, the idea of a "judicial hardening" of an individual because of their own decision and refusal to believe is a doctrine of men and not a doctrine of the Bible.

In John 12, we see that Jesus was speaking to a crowd in Jerusalem. In verse 37, we read that even though He had performed so many signs in their presence, many still did not believe in Him. In verse 39, John revealed that in fact *they could not believe*. And in verse 40, John revealed *the reason they could not believe* with a quote from Isaiah 6:10, when he wrote that God "has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them." (John 6:40).

Whenever anyone refuses to believe, it is only because they have never been called by God to faith in Christ. Only God's elect will be effectually called to faith in Christ, whereas all the others will be hardened against the Gospel message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and through Him alone. All the others will not believe because they cannot believe; they have been blinded to the truth of the Gospel message by God Himself.

Jesus taught that no man *can* come to Him, no man *is able* to come to Him, unless it has been granted to Him by the Father (John 6:65). Jesus taught again that everyone whom the Father has "given to Him" (or His elect) *will* come to Him, and that whoever comes to Him will never be cast out (John 6:37).

Further, Jesus taught that no one can come to Him unless the Father "draws" them, and that whoever is drawn to Him by the Father *will* be raised up at the last day (John 6:44). *This drawing that Jesus spoke about in John 6:44 is the*

*effectual calling of God*, and whoever receives this drawing, or this calling, **will be raised up at the last day; they will be saved**. Nowhere in the Scriptures is it taught that a man's own assent, or his own will and decision to believe in Christ, is necessary for salvation.

The Bible teaches that "by grace you have been saved through faith; **and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works**, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9, emphasis added). Believing in Christ is not something that one must "do" to get themselves saved, nor is it the result of any decision of a man's own will (Romans 9:16). Rather a genuine faith and belief in Christ is *evidence* that we have already been called to faith in Him; it is evidence that we have already passed out of death and into eternal life (John 5:24). Our faith in Christ is the gift of God that is granted to all His elect, in His time and according to His plan and purpose for our lives.

For those of us who have been brought to faith in Christ, we believe not because we decided for ourselves that we would believe. Rather, ***we believe in Christ because God chose to intervene in our lives to cause us to believe***. God chose to intervene in our lives to forcefully overcome our stubborn wills, which were hostile toward Him in our unregenerate state (Romans 8:7). He forcefully drew us to faith in Christ (John 6:44), just as He did for Saul of Tarsus when the time for his conversion came, ***even though he was still decidedly hostile toward the Gospel message and those who embraced it (Acts 9:1)***. Our faith in Christ is the gift of God given to His elect and has nothing whatsoever to do with any work, action, or decision of our own will.

In Romans 8, Paul described the order of salvation. In this passage, we read: "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; ***and these whom He called, He also justified***; and these whom He justified, He also glorified." (Romans 8:29-30, emphasis added). In this passage Paul describes the chain of events by which all of God's elect come to faith in Christ. In each "link" of this "chain" of events, we see God's action mentioned, and man's action, cooperation, or agreement is not mentioned at all.

God's elect are those who were *foreknown* by God, in that they were chosen by Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless before Him (again, Ephesians 1:4-5). They are those who were *predestined* by God the Father to be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. They are those whom the

Father has given to His Son, and they will all come to Him (John 6:37), at such time as they are called to faith in Christ. And Paul taught that *all those who are called to faith in Christ are also justified*, which demonstrates the power and the certainty of this effectual calling of God. And finally, all those who are *justified* by faith in Christ are also finally *glorified* together with Him in Heaven. Our salvation through faith in Christ is God's own work from beginning to end and is in no way dependent on our own will, decision, or cooperation in the matter.

Many will be deceived by "false Christs and false prophets", *but God will not allow any of His elect to be deceived* (Matthew 24:24). As God's elect, we will all, in His time, be given eyes to see and ears to hear and understand the Gospel message (Matthew 13:9, 16), and we will all be brought to faith in Christ. We are those to whom it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but to all the others it has not been granted (Matthew 13:11, Colossians 1:26-27). All the others will not believe because they are not able to believe; they do not belong to God and therefore they are not able to hear and understand the Gospel message (John 8:43-44, 47-48).

As God's elect, we are Jesus' sheep. The Good Shepherd calls each of us out by name, and we will follow Him because it has been granted to us to know His voice (John 10:3-5, 14-15).

Writing to God's elect (1 Peter 1:1), Peter said: "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9). As God's elect, we are those who were appointed to eternal life, and therefore we believed (Acts 13:48), whereas all the others were appointed to disobedience (1 Peter 2:8).

As God's elect, we are the "good soil" in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-23). The "seed" of the word of God, the Gospel message, fell upon our ears, and through our hearing, we were brought to faith in Christ (Romans 10:17). And our faith will be demonstrated and proven to be genuine by the fact that we will bear fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred times what was sown (Matthew 13:8-9, 23, John 15:8).